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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR RICE MEETS WITH PALAU PR BECK

¶1. (SBU) During a meeting with Ambassador Rice, Palau PermRep Stuart Beck conveyed a message from Palau President Toribiong that his country will "never change its loyalty" to the United States. To illustrate the point, Beck raised Palau's support in the UN General Assembly, including the recent "no" vote on the Cuban Embargo resolution as well as consistent "no" votes on Israel resolutions. Beck also noted that Palau recently accepted six Uighers from Guantanamo Bay detention facility at the request of President Obama, despite repeated Chinese demarches and domestic pressure to turn them away. Beck remarked that Palau is happy to be the United States' "number one friend," but added that the obligation now shifts to the United States to ensure the government is supported and "to do what it can for President Toribiong." It is "incongruous" for Palau to be "out in front" (in UNGA voting) with less support, he remarked. (Note: Palau ranks fourth in voting coincidence with the United States, but has consistently voted with the U.S. on particularly controversial resolutions like the Cuban Embargo resolution. End Note.)

¶2. (SBU) Ambassador Beck said that the current compact offer to Palau would "cripple" the government and was much lower than offers made to the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands in 2002. Ambassador Rice remarked that Palau receives more assistance from the United States per capita than any other country and it would increase under the new proposal. Beck responded that the Palauans use U.S. assistance to Micronesia and the Marshall Islands as a measuring stick. He contended that Palau's proposal had not received an adequate response.

¶3. (SBU) Beck reiterated that the U.S. agreement with Palau gives the United States fifty years to build military installations as needed in Palau "in the over-reaching manner of the Department of State," and also allows the United States to deny the country a military. A good part of Palau's sovereignty has been given to the United States, he contended, adding that no modern, normative international law would allow this. He praised the leadership of President Toribiong and the importance of keeping him for eight years, stressing the need for the United States to show its support for his presidency. Specifically, Beck said that the United States needs to either replenish Palau's trust fund or enter into a whole new negotiation of the Compact.

¶3. (SBU) Beck commented that the Pacific Islands were "touched" by recent U.S. engagement with the group, including Ambassador Rice's Pacific Island lunch and Secretary Clinton's meeting with Pacific Islands Heads of State. Ambassador Rice again thanked Beck for Palau's partnership and support on difficult issues such as the Cuban Embargo resolution. USUN Regional Advisor Ambassador Plaisted assured Beck that the United States values Palau's friendship, is taking Palau's compact review very seriously, and hopes to conclude the review as soon as possible.
Rice